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## WHY AM I A PRESBYTERIAN?

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THE writer hesitated about undertaking a reply to the above question in a Review, not from any indefiniteness of opinion, or weakness of conviction, but from some sense of the responsibility incurred. In the United States and Great Britain alone, there are seventeen or eighteen thousand congregations, at least, adhering to Presbyterianism. This does not include the Continent of Europe, the wide field of missions, nor the Australian Colonies. Men's minds reach the same practical results by different roads, and it is easy to see how some one might say: "I am a Presbyterian, but not for these reasons. This answer does not represent me." He would be a bold man who would try to formulate an answer to the question, "Why am I a Democrat?" or "Why am I a Republican?" with the confidence that all the adherents of these parties, respectively, would feel that just their convictions had been clearly stated. The caution, then, is proper that no one is committed to the arguments to be presented but the writer; and if any reader can make the case clearer or stronger to himself, or, in fitting ways to the world, the writer will be among the first to "accept the amendments."

One other preliminary statement it is proper to make. The question "Why am I a Unitarian?" has been answered in these pages. The answer involves the discussion of vital doctrines, and, strictly speaking, of nothing but doctrines, for one might be a Unitarian and hold by a Congregational, a Presbyterian, or a prelatic organization. I know, in fact, a small body of Unitarians who hold by Presbyterian government. Now a casual reader may expect a second discussion of doctrines in reply to our question. But a little thought will modify that expectation. Presbyterianism is a form of church government, and as such it is here presented. It does not, as a term, touch the question of theological beliefs as they are summed up, for example, in the Westminster

standards, or the Thirty-nine Articles. It deals with organization and methods of administration. That there are affinities between doctrines believed and the ways in which their believers shape their common organizations is admissible ; but we are not necessarily led, in answering the question, to minute details. Without tiring the patience of the readers, and without assuming that busy men and women have time for all the minute details of historical and denominational discussions, it will be the aim of the writer to show the main reasons why we hold by Presbyterianism.

A statement of the theory of Presbyterianism is proper in the first instance. This will naturally lead to the grounds on which the theory is rested. A reference to some of the ways in which Presbyterianism is differentiated from other forms of church organization, it is hoped, will bring into clearer light its characteristics and conclude the article.

The fundamental idea of Presbyterianism is that in the New Testament, the one guide-book, all ministers stand on the same level, as distinguished from the "orders" and grades that sprung up in the progress of the ages, and that they have no one over them such as a diocesan bishop. In a body of believers, one of their number, believed to be qualified by gifts and graces to edify his brethren, chosen by them, and duly recognized, is a New Testament minister. A group of such bodies of believers, or churches associated together, for the sake of order, mutual edification and increase of spiritual strength, must needs arrange methods of mutual recognition and common operation. If gathered together by outside leaders, such as missionaries or evangelists, they would avail themselves of their moral weight and aid in the settlement of ministers and the adoption of rules of joint action ; but the ministers once recognized have no human superior in office. They are subject to one another as in the very nature of society of any sort ; but there is no ruler or governor between them and the "Chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls."

Then is the minister, or pastor, the autocratic ruler of the congregation over which he "presides ?" No. Presbyterianism includes the representation of the people by a body of men chosen by themselves, and called "elders." It anticipates the free form of modern civil government. Of these elders the pastor is one for administrative ends. Just as the directors of a bank, finding all the time of a man needed for the conduct of its affairs, will select one

and enable him to live without other business while they are joined with him in management, so an elder with gifts and graces, is put in a position to "give himself wholly" to the ministry, while the body of elders—he being one of them—has in hand the governing of the local community. All rule; some are fitted especially to teach and assigned to that duty. When the "church" includes a number of congregations, that they should be associated together for common ends is natural. So it is the natural outgrowth of the common life that men should be trained for the teaching, just as young men are trained for banking. When a region is occupied by such Christian communities, meetings become a part of the common life, and rules and regulations follow as in any other form of social co-operation. Here the elders, ruling and teaching, constitute the natural representatives. If a statement of common belief has to be framed as a testimony to man; if rules are to be framed for carrying out the ends of the Church; if they are to be maintained and enforced, the assembled elders, representing the company of believers, and with no power above them, civil or ecclesiastical, constitute the court. These details are not set forth in form in the Scripture, just as the doctrines of the Christian system are not formulated in Scripture as in a creed. They are the outcome of Scriptural principles applied to a Christian community, just as courts of law are the outcome of right principles applied to civil life, and as an elective judiciary supercedes the "chief" of savagism or the despot of the Orient. Strictly speaking, any body of elders is a Presbytery. So the Protestant German brethren (among whom the elements of Presbyterianism have been accepted since September, 1873) call our "Session" a Presbytery or body of elders, and our "Presbytery" a local Synod. It is not meant that the details of so many synods or general assemblies are set down in Scripture. These are matters for Christian discretion. To say this is to concede nothing to outsiders. No pleader for the divine origin of prelatic government, (we use this phrase to avoid confusion, for, as will be seen, we claim episcopal government,) would claim to find the size and number of the dioceses prescribed in Scripture. All the "elders," or "presbyters" are "bishops:" all rule. Some labor in the word and teaching.

Do "elders" include all the officers in a congregation of the Presbyterian order? No. We have "bishops and deacons,"

as had the church at Philippi (Phil. i. 1). Any organization must have questions of means, of accommodation, of poor members, of the care of them, to be attended to. These are not purely spiritual matters. They are the common affairs of a spiritual body, just as the bank account, store, dwelling and expenses of a Christian man are his common matters. These he has in common with all other men ; but he is expected to manage them in a Christian way. So a church has buildings, means, claims, obligations in common with other forms of organized society ; but it is expected to manage them in consistency with its distinctive character. This is the function of the "deacons." United States' law has made a body of "trustees" necessary to the holding of congregational property in some quarters, and in Great Britain, elected officers perform this, and other diaconal functions, without bearing the precise name, although in this regard more exact language is now coming into use. Presbyterians, taking the rules given by the Apostle Paul to Timothy as their guides in this matter, do not look for teaching or preaching from these deacons. (See 1 Tim. iii. 8-10.) The elders or bishops must be "apt to teach" (1 Tim. iii. 2), "able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Tit. i. 9). There is no such requirement regarding the deacons. It is even conceivable that Christian communities may be so placed as not to need these as ministers, bishops, or elders are needed. Hence one does not wonder that Titus has no directions given him on this matter.

These, then, are the principles of government and the two classes of officers of Presbyterianism. Moderators are no more permanent officers than are the chairmen of public meetings. Disorderly members are judged by officers chosen by the membership ; officers are tried, if disorderly, by their peers, just as a lawyer, discrediting his profession, is tried by "members of the bar," vindicated if innocent, disbarred if guilty.

It is needless to say that Presbyterians have no place for a pope, or for *the* Pope. They have no place for an archbishop, or a prelate of any kind. Ministers in a Church of over six thousand congregations may differ in gifts, experience, influence, and the like, but the vote of the pastor or the ruling elder of the smallest congregation in Dakota is of equal value with that of any of his brethren. The parity of the ministry, the adequate representation of the people, the privilege and responsibility of choosing their

officers—these are the leading elements in Presbyterianism, resting as we believe on principles enjoined in Scripture, historically traceable, and working on the whole as well as the best principles do when intrusted to human hands. Presbyterianism is not without constituted authority. It seeks elders that “rule well,” and it calls on its people to “obey them that are over them in the Lord.” It has its “orders”—bishops, or presbyters, and deacons. It owns Christ as the sole Ruler and Legislator, and it traces to His gift apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, for the work of the ministry, for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ. In this list of servants it sees no room for a prelate. In accordance with the radical idea of the Reformation, we hold the Scriptures to be the rule in this matter. Hence to show that early “Fathers” or councils did so and so does not touch our position. We try to move along the lines laid down, in directions and in practice, in the word of God.

It is now proper to pass on to a concise statement of the grounds on which the Presbyterian theory rests. Again I venture to recall the form of the question, “Why am I a Presbyterian?” It may be allowable to state the reasons as they seem to have weight with the respondent, though others might, with conclusions no less strong, arrange them differently. The following statement of the form of Church government from which, among Protestant churches, Presbyterianism is most widely parted, will show how they are called for. “The ministry is divided into three orders: 1. Bishops; 2. Priests; 3. Deacons. The priests at first were called Bishops and Elders. After the Apostles died, as there were no more Apostles, the name Bishop was confined to the first order which took the Apostles’ place. Timothy and Titus were such Bishops. Bishops consecrate their successors in the Episcopate; ordain the Lower Orders of the Clergy; confirm the baptized and preside in the Councils of the Church.” This is the exact language, even to the capitals, of a prelatie Catechism in use and on sale in New York. It is easier to transcribe than to understand it. Now, in the first place, I find no such arrangement in the New Testament as officers taking the apostles’ place; no such officers as “priests;” no subordination of those called “elders” and “bishops” to bishops who took the apostles’ places. But the New Testament is the one authority. We do not go to the Fathers for doctrine nor for Church government. The sufficiency of

Scripture is maintained. We hold that if men will only go far enough down with "the Fathers" they must accept the elements of papal organization and doctrine. We hold to the word, and we see in it no order of men superior to those called "bishops and elders." One of the later writers on "The Organization of the Early Christian Churches," Hatch (Bampton Lecture, for 1880), argues that the body of officers in the early Christian communities were known individually and collectively as *presbuteroi* (we put the Greek into English), and he adds, "they were also known—for I shall here assume what the weight of evidence has rendered practically indisputable—by the name *episcopi*" (p. 38). Not one word or suggestion has Mr. Hatch—a zealous and able advocate for prelacy as a development in post-apostolic times—to produce for any officer provided for in the *New Testament* superior to the elders or presbyters. Of course he can show that, later, the diocesan rose above them, just as the Roman Catholic can show that, later, the Bishop of Rome came to the headship of the Church. We believe there is no place and no provision for them in the New Testament. He shows "the causes which led to that great change in Christian organization by which the functions of this original plurality of probably co-ordinate officers came practically to pass into the hands of a single officer" (p. 39). We are for keeping things as they were before this passage, just as Protestantism is for keeping things as they were before the development of the papacy. His history begins with Justin Martyr, and indicates that the elder who received and distributed the gifts for the poor came to be called *episcopos*. Whether his argument is weak or strong is not the point. That he makes it at all is evidence that a most learned advocate of prelacy with all the advantages of scholarship up to 1880 has to admit that the superior to the *presbuteroi* is a development of post-apostolic times, is not apostolic, and has no basis in the New Testament. The space at our disposal does not admit of much more that might be said on this matter.

2. Without detailing the process, or wearying the reader with ancient words, we proceed to say, in the second place, that there was a historical preparation for Presbyterianism in the Apostolic Church. The Hebrews had a tribe of priests and Levites in which office was hereditary. But there were frequent apostasies under this priesthood. Captivity and dispersion of the people followed. To reprove the apostates and to revive religion prophets and

teachers came in. Congregations of Jews came to be formed in the great cities of the East and the West. They carried the elders of their earliest times with them. Teachers thus came to supersede priests, whose functions implied the temple at Jerusalem, and the Church was prepared for the abandonment of the priestly order and the setting up of the teachers. No one pretends that the hereditary priesthood of Judaism is continued. So in God's providence, which takes in all time and all lands, the existence of Hebrew congregations, with boards of elders governing the members, prepared for the Christian congregations with the like governing body. So Mr. Hatch expends much learning in proving that Jews, when they became Christians, had "a governing body of elders" in each community (p. 58), and no "change was needed in the organization" (p. 59). He spends much learning in tracing the process by which Gentile churches also came to have "government by a council or committee," all but universally, but spontaneously. "The Christian council of presbyters" exercised discipline, and "exercised a consensual jurisdiction in matters of dispute between Christian and Christian" (pp. 68-71). What is thus with much erudition made out by Hatch we accept from the New Testament. From Miletus Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the Church (Acts, xx. 17), and in a most solemn charge and warning against dangers he never once hints at deference to a diocesan or relief through his rule. He lays all the responsibility on the elders. The Church at Philippi (i. 1) had its "bishops and deacons," and not a hint is given of the need of a diocesan. Titus was left in Crete to "ordain elders in every city." Not one word is said of any successor to him who would claim submission and manage affairs.

Having in view these facts, we can see how the providential forces at work in the Jewish Church prepared for the organizing of Christian congregations with governing bodies of elders. It is needless to hunt up parallels in civil life to explain the like arrangement in churches of Gentiles. The churches which God's blessing on Anglican missionaries' work in India secures, will take the form of the Anglican Church. The Presbyterian missionaries organize their native brethren on Presbyterian lines. The aggressive workers—missionaries—of the Apostolic Church were Jews, and they organized on Jewish lines. Nowhere do the apostles say: "Your elders were equal in rank, and managed your affairs,



but it shall not be so any more. You shall have successors to us, diocesan bishops who will be over you, and who will be above pastors, will consecrate successors in the episcopate, and ordain the lower orders of the clergy among you." We argue from the absence of any repeal of the law making children members of the Jewish Church that no repeal was contemplated. The silence of the founders of the churches as to prelatic successors to them we take as conclusive in like manner that no change was contemplated.

3. We hold that the New Testament treats the *presbuteroi* and *episcopoi* as two names for the same officers. Why argue this? Because it is common to say in defense of prelacy that the *episcopos* came to mean one superior to the elders, as one can see in the Fathers. We say this plea is worthless, hardly even deserves notice. "My Father is greater than I," came to mean at an early day, and in a most pronounced way, that Jesus was not in any sense the equal of the Father. The "power of the keys" came to mean papal supremacy. Do we therefore stand with Arius or submit to the popes? No. We aim at realizing the plan of the apostles and the ideal of the New Testament before decay and apostasy began. It is of importance, therefore, to show that in the New Testament the "elders" and the "bishops" were the same parties with the same powers. The friends who are interested in prelacy are the only parties who are interested in denying our position; so we shall be content to offer our readers the conclusions to which representative Greek scholars, with every inducement to think otherwise, have been brought. Alford, a dignitary of the Anglican Church, combines the views of De Wette and Meyer, and says: "The *presbuteroi* are in the New Testament identical with *episcopoi*" (see Acts, xx. 17, 28; Tit. i. 5, 7; 1 Peter, v. 12). Then quoting in evidence of his position Theodoret on Phil. i. 1, he adds: "The title *episcopos* as applied to one person superior to the *presbuteros*, and answering to our 'bishop,' appears to have been unknown in apostolic times." The same author says on Acts, xx. 17: "The English version has hardly dealt fairly, in this case, with the sacred text in rendering *episcopous*, ver. 28, 'overseers,' whereas it ought there, as in all other places, to have been 'bishops,' that the fact of elders and bishops having been originally and apostolically synonymous might be apparent to the ordinary English reader, which now it is not." No. King James's translators (who put in Easter for Passover) did not wish to imperil

their bishops, and hence the unauthorized postscript to the Epistle to Titus making him out "first bishop of Crete." Millions of good Anglicans have represented him to themselves in full canonical costume, mitre on his head and crosier in hand. Here, of course, as in other cases, the Revision sustains the Presbyterian view. It would be easy to add testimony of the same kind from Bishop Ellicott, Dean Stanley, not to speak of devout and sensible Anglican commentators like Thomas Scott.

That good men making these admissions yet accept prelacy on the ground of its development, of a process of evolution, of its early post-apostolic establishment is a matter for themselves. On their conscientiousness we make no reflection. We only allege that to us this line of argument seems to "give away" the Protestant cause; and as a concession it justifies Presbyterians in keeping their ground, consistently with their belief that the Scriptures are a perfect rule of faith and practice, and that the Church is to be organized on the lines the apostles lay down.

It may be mentioned as confirmatory of the views here given that Luke reports in the "Acts of the Apostles" the appointment of apostles and of deacons among Jewish believers, but says nothing of the eldership. Why? Because the eldership was the one permanent recognized office of the Jews, and without any need for appointment passed on into the Christian churches composed of Jews. But when Gentiles are organized into churches, as at Lystra, Iconium and Antioch (Acts, xiv. 23), he reports the "ordaining" ("appointing," in Revision) of elders in every church. So Titus has to set in order the things that are wanting, and appoint elders in every city of Crete (Tit. i. 5), these elders being of course identified in ver. 7 as "bishops" or overseers.

Now it may be objected that there is no popular right here, that Titus is spoken of as "appointing." Let this be illustrated. An agent of the Sunday-School Union goes through Dakota, organizes schools, getting teachers and pupils together, showing the need and place of a superintendent, etc., and leading the people to choose and call some one of their number thereto, he aiding with needed counsel. Would it be a historical error, or imply any disregard of the people's rights, if he said, "As instructed, I set in order the things that were wanting, and appointed officers in all the schools?" Surely not. Now the language of Acts, xiv. 23, runs in the Revision: "And when they had appointed for them elders

in every church"—not one elder but several, in each church. But the Greek word for "appointed" bears out our analogy precisely. Dr. Lechler of Leipsic (in "Lange's Commentary") on Acts xi. 23, gives a long and clear statement of which this is the substance. "*Cheirotonoe*" (we put the Greek word in English letters) "signifies: *to raise the hands*; *to vote, elect by stretching out the hands*. The expression accordingly suggests the thought that the apostles may have appointed and superintended a congregational election. And this view is supported by the circumstances related in ch. vi. 2 ff., where the Twelve directed that the election of the Seven should be held." Paul and Barnabas, then, he argues, did not nominate suitable men solely on their own authority. They aided the congregations in the election. There is not a week in the year in which new Presbyterian churches are not supplied with officers in identically the same way. The people of the early churches are told of the need; their confidence in some of their own number is an essential to their filling the places; they agree on the selection of these officers, and the organization needed, where there were so many adversaries, is completed. The plan was simple, in the line of the ways of the people, and is a precedent for all time.

That later methods came in we can well understand, but we do not imitate them. A writer in "Appleton's Cyclopaedia" on "Bishop," says: "At first the bishops were elected by the clergy and people of the diocese, but on account of the tumults inseparable from popular assemblies, various councils, from that of Laodicea in the fourth century to that of the Lateran in 1215, restrained and suppressed the electoral rights of the laity." Passing by the opening clause—the whole article is crude—would the "development," or "evolution," described here be a precedent for a Christian Church in the United States to-day? If not, why not? Poor human nature sometimes makes trouble in choosing ministers, trustees, even choirs, as it does, now and then, in political elections. Shall we get rid of all that by "suppressing all electoral rights of the laity?" This would be the logical following out of the principle that post-apostolic development is to be our rule.

We repeat, then, that the parity of the ministry, the existence of only elders and deacons, and the identity of the elder with the bishop—the distinctive features of Presbyterianism—are, as principles of organic life, illustrated and enjoined in the New Testament,

which is our authority in this matter. "Priests" in the Anglican sense, as men who alone can, as separate from preaching deacons, administer sacraments and "absolution" are nowhere recognized in the New Testament. All believers are a "holy priesthood." The ministers of the gospel are not described as priests in Scripture, nor by us. We deem the word unscriptural and mischievous and representative of ideas unprotestant, and which is final, unscriptural. "Successors to the apostles," in any rational sense of that phrase, are nowhere to be found in the Scriptures. If they were to be, twelve would be, as with the Irvingites, the logical limit. Diocesan bishop are, whether for good or ill, post-apostolic. We aim at being apostolic.

If varied repetition of these things has made them clear, we may add that on the same general line the Presbyterian Church goes without fasts and festivals, saints' days, and rites which the Catechism, already quoted, makes out to be "lesser Sacramental Rites," as Confirmation and Absolution. Nor do we put "Holy Orders" and Matrimony in this relation. If we did we might as well take the seven sacraments of Rome. Nor do we call the communion-table an "altar," nor hold with this Catechism that in the Lord's supper first the bread and wine, afterward the body and blood of Christ, under the form of bread and wine, are offered to the First Person of the Godhead. We know that this view was "developed" in the progress of the ages, but we reject it as unscriptural. Forms of prayer Presbyterianism allows, but does not make them uniform and compulsory. These are specimens of details in which Presbyterianism follows its rule of deference to the New Testament on all that affects the Christian Church.

We now pass naturally to the third matter proposed to be touched, namely, some of the ways in which Presbyterianism is differentiated from other systems of Church organization. Except in the matter of names it is the same with the Reformed Church till lately known as "Dutch." The Congregational and Baptist brethren, as a whole, group together neighboring congregations, the pastors and some representatives of the people meeting as an "Association" for the recognizing of churches, settling of ministers, and the like, but they disclaim any more than advisory authority. Presbyterianism makes this executive, but gives the right of appeal, to any member, to the higher courts, much as the State gives to a citizen. This, however, is a matter of agreement

and arrangement, and the present writer has, again and again, been permitted to join in "Association" meetings that had all the merits of an orderly Presbytery, and he is bound to confess he has seen Presbyteries where some resolutions at least were treated as only "advisory," and not acted on even at that.

The English and Canadian Methodists, now having the laity represented in their courts, are so much on Presbyterian lines that in the Dominion a union of the organizations has been gravely proposed. We do not—the writer here speaks for himself—regard the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church as claiming succession to the apostles, the sole right to ordain, or other individual powers. They are rather like the synodical missionaries of the Presbyterian churches in the Western States, chosen by the church in its Presbyteries, set free to inspect, advise, arrange, find places for men, and men for places. That they are not an essential of that Methodism which God has so blessed, is shown by their being peculiar to the United States. Methodism in Great Britain is not "episcopal" and has no bishops. It may be said that Presbyterians differ in modes of administration. Granted; but the Anglican Church in the Old World and the Anglican in the United States have wider differences, springing out of their respective histories, than ordinary Presbyterian churches present, and there are no such divergencies of conviction as we see represented in the Anglican "High Church," "Low Church," or Evangelical, and "Broad" Church parties. It is sometimes alleged that Presbyterianism does not hold the people. Well, look to England with royal and government patronage, endowments, universities, and all outward things in favor of the "Established Church," and a good half of the people have gone out of it. In Scotland, on the other hand, most of the landowners are of the Anglican Church and have often been extremely partisan, and yet about two hundred and fifty small Anglican congregations represent the numbers that have kept, or gone, out of the national Presbyterianism. There is, moreover, this suggestive distinction, that while bodies have gone out of the Scottish Church, it has been to find a purer Presbyterianism, while in England, Dissent has never tried to carry with it the distinctive features of "the Church." It seemed to say, "farthest from these is best."

If inquiry be made as to the Presbyterian way of combining churches in synods and assemblies, on a plan not recognized by

multitudes with whom we are one in the substance of doctrine, we have only to say that as we read the New Testament we cannot but see that in Jerusalem, for example, with five thousand believers at a very early day, there must have been many congregations. Even differences of nationality and of language would contribute to this; but they are grouped together as the "Church at Jerusalem." And when error as to the continuance of Judaistic rites threatened the peace and purity of the Church, a conference, synod, or general assembly (we shall not quarrel over details of name), met as reported in Acts, xv., considered the matter, and came to a decision described in this fashion: "Then pleased it the apostles and elders with the whole Church to send," etc. The writing of the decision was on this wise: "The apostles and elders and brethren" (or in the Revision, "the apostles and the elder brethren") "send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia." A deputation of brethren with their letter seems to have settled the matter, ended the strife and produced great joy. Not only so but (Acts, xvi. 4) as Paul and his associates "went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem," to the establishment in the faith of the churches and their daily increase (ver. 5). On this line we proceed, in all matters common to widely scattered congregations, in synods and assemblies. The idea of the unity of all the churches, rather than the independence of each of all the rest, seems to be assumed through the narrative. But we repeat that the points of divergence here are of comparatively little importance. A Presbyterian synod on a missionary day and a meeting of the A. M. B. C. for Foreign Missions have much in common.

The same general remark applies to our Baptist brethren. It has been the frequent joy of the present writer to partake of, even to administer, the communion in Baptist churches. A Presbyterian Church receives the certified member of any Baptist, Methodist, Episcopalian, or Congregational Church as a brother, demanding no further qualifying rite. So the ministers ordained in any of these bodies are received on equal terms. Re-ordination is not required. That interchange of pulpits with them is both common and delightful, does not need to be proved. There are divergences of view, but they are not held to be barriers to communion either in feeling or in working.

In the Catechism already referred to, the "Catholic Church is made to consist of the Roman, Greek and Anglican," *not* in communion with one another; and the great churches just named outside them are the "Protestant sects," called so, we are told, from a Latin word to *cut off*; "they have cut themselves off from the full fellowship of the Christian Church." Without discussing the meaning and origin of the Latin "*secta*," or the charity of this application of it, we only claim that Presbyterianism is more catholic, more scriptural, more self-consistent, than "Anglican, Greek or Roman," so widely separated from one another, and so pronounced in their censures upon one another, and that it is adapted by its organization to work easily and harmoniously with the great bodies of believers known as Baptists, Methodists, Congregationalists, and constituting no small portion of the great Church of Christ on the earth.

There are only two points to which, in conclusion, we devote a few sentences. Taking the argument of such a writer as Hatch, we see that the "evolution," until errors came in, and Church and state came into new relations, produced in the earlier stages practically Presbyterian congregations. "When," he says, p. 78, "the episcopal system had established itself, there was a bishop wherever in later times there would have been a parish church. From the small province of proconsular Asia, which was about the size of Lincolnshire, forty-two bishops were present at an early council: in the only half-converted province of North Africa 470 episcopal towns are known by name." This is a familiar truth to Presbyterians of the Old World, and hence they have no difficulty in accepting the statement that St. Patrick, when Ireland had but a small population, left it with 365 bishops. They were "bishops" of so many congregations; and if Rome and England had left the island to this organization and the connected doctrines, there would, probably, be less complication about the Irish problem to-day!

Our second point is that Presbyterianism is well adapted to work on a line parallel with that of civil institutions in the United States. The history of the Constitution readily explains this fact. Election of officers by the people—an element which the Anglican Church in England largely ignores, the accountability of officers to their peers, independence of the sections in their own matters, inter-dependence of the whole, with sessions, presbyteries, synods,

and assemblies or supreme courts, up to which appeals can be carried—in these things American citizens find a simplicity, a practical directness, and a recognition of individual rights with which their civil life—if they accept its responsibilities, must make them familiar. They find the Church's teachers are not "priests," but ministers chosen by themselves; they with the people, make a "holy priesthood;" all true churches and ministers are in succession to the apostles in holding their doctrines (the apostles, in the nature of things, could have no successors); nothing human—antiquity, tradition, "fathers," or councils—divides authority with the supreme word of God, enthroned in the Church as it is to be in the heart; and they find all ecclesiastical history warning against the beginnings of compromise and surrender, just as civil history shows how liberty is secured only by constant resistance to insidious interference with original and heaven-bestowed rights.

JOHN HALL.